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ERS NEWSLETTER

A Bimonthly Newsletter for Economic Research Service Employees and Colleagues

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

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ERS Hosts Regional Agricultural Outlook Seminar in Midwest

About 50 leaders from industry and universities attended an ERS and Farm Foundation cosponsored seminar on the 1988 drought and next year's outlook for crops and livestock, in St. Louis, Mo., in late September. The seminar was moderated by USDA assistant secretary Ewen Wilson and closed with a summary by ERS associate administrator Bob Robinson.

The day-long session included a discussion on the macroeconomic outlook for the United States by ERS economist Ralph Monaco, an overview of the drought by Donald Seaborg, and the outlook for U.S. commodity exports by Frederick Surls. The situation and outlook for wheat, feed grains, and oilseeds were presented by ERS economists Edward Allen, James Cole, and Roger Hoskin; red meat and poultry prospects by John Ginzler and Leland Southard; and expected commodity costs and returns by Gregory Hanson. Industry representatives from Purina Mills, Pro Exporter Network, and the Helming Group served as discussants at the session.

Study Tour Looks at Low-Input Farming in Midwest

ERS economists Neill Schaller (786-1880) and Kenneth Baum (786-1449) were among 40 people from the USDA, World Bank, U.S. Agency for

International Development, farm press, and other organizations who went to Kansas, Nebraska, and Iowa to see farmers' use of low-input (low-agricultural) farming methods and learn about land-grant university research and education on low-input agriculture.

Tour members learned that more farmers are shifting to low-input agriculture, experimenting with it, or thinking about it as they search for profitable and environmentally sound farming approaches. A key ingredient is the commitment of skilled management to guide the transition from intensive monoculture and continuous cropping with heavy reliance on manufactured chemical fertilizers and pesticides to a customized farming system emphasizing rotations, crop/livestock diversification, and biological and other approaches to pest management (combining favorable features of old and new methods).

U.S. Spring Wheat Team Visits the U.S.S.R.

ERS economist Christian Foster (786-1624), Neal Fisher (North Dakota Wheat Commission), and Keith Severin (USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service) recently visited the U.S.S.R. under the U.S.-U.S.S.R. agreement that calls for the exchange of 31 teams of agricultural scientists and specialists between the two countries during 1988-89.

The U.S. team traveled throughout the Soviet "new

lands" (northern Kazakhstan and western Siberia).

The team's objectives were to:

- Study the Soviet wheat production process, including the development of new seed varieties, use of fallow, cropping and tillage practices, input use, and other aspects of an intensive technology program and to evaluate its impacts on wheat yields and quality.

- Examine the economics of the Soviet wheat industry, including the impact of new forms of labor and management (contracts and leases) on productivity and efficiency, the effect of the new State procurement price bonuses, changes in the costs of production, investment in infrastructure, and the use of spring wheat and its implications for trade.

- Assess the current situation and outlook for the 1988 spring wheat crop.

Grains in the new lands matured and were harvested earlier this year than last because of above-average temperatures. Thus, the U.S. team observed the final stages of the harvest in most areas. Seeding of winter crops was under way. Emphasis was being placed on increasing durum wheat production.

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Chinese Researchers Spend 3 Months in ERS

Four researchers from the Research Center for Rural Development of the State Council, China, are in ERS for 3 months to learn about economic analysis and computer applications.

Shengzhou Pan, an assistant professor, is studying short- and intermediate-term forecasting of agricultural commodity demand and supply. Xiaohui Zhang, a computer system engineer, is studying computer software use and data base applications. Economists Jihe Shong and Tian Zeng are examining farm indicators, rural farm structure, and food demand and consumption issues.



Top: Xiaohui Zhang and Jihe Shong
Bottom: Shengzhou Pan and Tian Zeng

Current Research

Study Examines Possible Effects of Changes in Milk Marketing Orders

Responding to a request from members of Congress, ERS economists Howard McDowell, Ann Fleming, and Richard Fallert (786-1710) have estimated the likely economic impacts of changes in provisions of Federal milk marketing orders. Their study concluded that the order system can be modified to deliver

the same consumer benefits at substantially lower costs, that system changes tend to reduce and redistribute producer revenues significantly, and that savings in Government outlays and consumer expenditures far outweigh producer losses.

The changes examined include eliminating practices that, while helping to stabilize producer prices, have also discouraged the marketing of reconstituted milk. The savings in transportation costs—due to shipping dried milk rather than fluid—are offset by added marketing-order-related costs processors must pay to market milk from other regions, in addition to drying and other costs of producing reconstituted milk.

The research is reported in *Federal Milk Marketing Orders—An Analysis of Alternative Policies* (AER-598), August 1988.

Did the Drought Cause Losses on Grain Marketing Contracts?

One of the questions raised by the 1988 drought was whether grain producers with drought-reduced yields would default on marketing contracts and leave elevators with serious financial losses. ERS economists Richard Heifner (786-1868), Joy Harwood, Linwood Hoffman, and Bruce Wright addressed that question in a special study involving telephone and field interviews with several hundred elevator managers in 13 States.

Results of the study, mandated in the Disaster Assistance Act of 1988, eased fear of heavy losses, indicating that farmers were expected to default on less than 2 percent of their contracts. Only 1 percent of the elevator managers interviewed expected that losses from farmers failing to meet contract commitments would exceed 10 percent of the elevator's net worth.

Soil Erosion Model Used in Drought Assessment

EPIC, the Erosion-Productivity Impact Calculator, is a model developed several years ago by ERS and USDA's Agricultural Research Service and Soil Conservation Service researchers to estimate the long-term effects of erosion on soil productivity. The 1988 drought proved the versatility of EPIC as a tool for related short-term purposes.

As evidence of a severe, widespread drought accumulated in the spring of 1988, researchers Kenneth Algozin (786-1403), Klaus Alt, Thomas Hebert, Timothy Osborn, and Edwin Young decided to try EPIC as a tool for estimating yield impacts of the drought. They selected simulation sites in significant wheat, corn, and soybean production areas; identified crops, soils, and tillage practices common to those sites; and arranged to receive weekly updates of daily temperature and rainfall data for each site. Weekly EPIC runs began, using actual weather data and three possible weather scenarios for the rest of the growing season. The

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Administrator's Letter — Looking Back and Looking Ahead

This is the season for reflecting on what we have to be grateful for, what we have done with our opportunities, and how we can do better in the year ahead. In addition, the changing of administrations is always a time for reflecting on both achievements and missed opportunities and for looking ahead to the challenges and opportunities of a new era.



It has been a good year to be administrator of ERS. I am especially grateful for:

- *My colleagues in ERS.* This is an agency of people with special devotion to public service, excellence, and civic duty. Every day brings to my attention new examples of competent, caring people willing to do whatever is necessary to get the job done well. The sense of loss with the passing of good friends like Royal Thompson, John Putman, Jitendar Mann, De Vo, and Carrie Hicks reminds us how much we each come to depend on what others have to offer, and how much our lives become intertwined, as is the case in all real families. The people of ERS have always distinguished the agency...that is more so today than ever before.

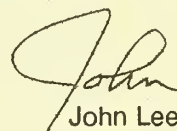
- *A year of distinguished achievement—individually and corporate.* From drought work to trade analysis, policy analysis, new commodity initiatives, technology assessments, response to new labor issues, mandated studies, and a list that could go on for pages, we demonstrated responsiveness, competence, objectivity, and excellence. The work of all our divisions and their people have achieved national and international acclaim. These accomplishments trace to one source: competent people committed to what they are doing.

- *A new era of productive relations with our "sister" economics agencies.* Working relations at staff and agency levels with NASS, WAOB, EAS, EMS, and OE have contributed to a new sense of teamwork in serving the information needs of policymakers and the public. This growing team spirit can be attributed to the attitudes and efforts of the leaders of our sister agencies and to the daily commitments of many on our staffs to put the public good above differences in point of view.

- *For support and for what we have learned from those we have worked for in this administration.* I have had the privilege of working for and learning from three assistant secretaries for economics in this administration as well as their predecessors. While they have all been different, they have all brought their own commitment to public service and to serving the legitimate needs of our constituents. More than most people will ever fully appreciate, they have worked to protect our integrity and role as providers of honest analysis and information. Their jobs are not easy. We sometimes forget that they, too, work under pressure from many directions and absorb most of the shocks that could otherwise be transmitted to us. Ewen Wilson, Bob Thompson, and Bill Leshner and their deputies each brought their own views of priorities and their own philosophies to their jobs. Working with each of them has been a positive learning experience for us.

As a new year approaches, I look forward to the challenges of a new administration, increasing our effectiveness in communicating useful information, responding to the analytical issues posed by a host of emerging issues, and, especially, to getting to know all of you better as we work together.

Thanks to all in ERS who contributed to our achievements of the year now ending and to all those outside who provided support and feedback so vital to our work. Have a happy holiday season. May 1989 be a year of peace, fulfillment, and accomplishment for you and your families.


John Lee

resulting yield estimates augmented crop condition information from the field and other information to form the basis for ERS yield estimates, which were important in guiding USDA's response to the drought.

How did the drought affect soil erosion? Common sense would say, "No rain, no erosion." But it did rain; it rained in rare, but often heavy, downpours on land covered with sparse, drought-withered vegetation. Using EPIC, economist Timothy Osborn (786-1437) estimated that rain-induced soil erosion in drought areas may have been as much as 2½ times greater than in a normal weather year. Related runoff of fertilizer nutrients also may have caused greater water quality deterioration than in normal years.

Agricultural Exports Affect Rural Economies Unevenly

ERS economists Judith Sommer (786-1525) and Fred Hines report that U.S. agricultural exports affected rural economies unevenly in the 1980's. The 419 export-dependent counties benefited most from the economic upswing of the 1970's and were hit hardest by the downturn in the early 1980's. Export-dependent counties were those in which at least 50 percent of total farm sales are generated by five major export-bound crops: corn, wheat, soybeans, cotton, and rice. Boom and bust cycles appear to be the most severe in the 173 export-dependent counties that rely on farming for more than one-fifth of all labor and proprietor income.

Economic expectations for export-dependent counties are beginning to brighten since farm exports rose substantially in 1987 and are expected to rise again in

1988. The Food Security Act of 1985 brought U.S. grain prices more in line with world prices, the U.S. Government is negotiating for freer world trade, and U.S. farmers have improved their competitiveness by reducing debt and cutting production costs. Also, the dollar has depreciated against many foreign currencies.

CRP Will Benefit Water Quality

The Conservation Reserve Program, when it reaches its enrollment target of 40-45 million acres in 1990, will be the largest conservation-oriented cropland retirement program in the Nation's history. While the CRP is expected to reduce crop supplies and related commodity program costs and to increase farm income, its greatest economic benefits will probably be realized in the environmental area, primarily in improved water quality.

The CRP is targeted at highly erodible cropland. When this land is enrolled in the program, it is planted in permanent vegetation, which reduces soil erosion and nutrient runoff from fertilizer use. This brings water quality benefits in the form of reduced flood damage, water treatment cost, reservoir sedimentation, dredging cost, and roadside and irrigation ditch maintenance cost and increased participation in recreational fishing.

ERS economist Marc Ribaud (786-1444) estimates that benefits accruing to water users from CRP retirement of 45 million acres of cropland will range from \$1.9 billion to \$5.3 billion over the life of the contracts. Greatest total benefits probably will be realized in the Corn Belt, followed by the Appalachian and Lake States regions. Per acre benefits will be highest in the Delta States, Appalachian, and Northeast regions.

Personnel Notes

Clayton Is New AMS Deputy Administrator

Former ERS deputy administrator Kenneth Clayton was recently named deputy administrator for marketing programs, Agricultural Marketing Service.

During 1987-88, Clayton was detailed to the Office of the U.S.



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Trade Representative, where he worked with USTR staff on an interdepartmental task force to

develop the U.S. position on agriculture for the Uruguay round of multilateral trade negotiations.

During 1979-83, Clayton was chief of the Food and Agricultural Policy Branch. In that position, he was involved in USDA's efforts on the 1981 farm legislation. He became director of the former National Economics Division in 1983 and was appointed deputy administrator of ERS in 1987.

Since 1983, Clayton has led the U.S. participation in a number of activities at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris, including a major study on liberalized trade in agriculture that calculated subsidy levels and estimated international effects of reduced levels of assistance.

LeBlanc Is Named RTD Associate Director

Michael LeBlanc has been appointed associate director, Resources and Technology Division. He will serve in that capacity during Katherine Reichelderfer's absence as a resident fellow at the National

Center for Food and Agricultural Policy, Resources for the Future.

LeBlanc first joined ERS in 1980 to conduct research on energy policy, capital structure and investment, and tax policy. In 1985, he left ERS to be a senior



Carolyn Riley

economist at Batelle Pacific Northwest Laboratories, where his research focused on energy-related natural resource issues. He rejoined ERS in 1986 as leader of the Domestic and International Policy Impacts Section. LeBlanc has conducted research on agricultural investment impacts of monetary and fiscal policy and on the feasibility and impacts of ethanol production. He currently is leading planning efforts for a major research program on trade liberalization.

LeBlanc's research has been widely disseminated in professional journals and USDA reports and at professional meetings and has earned him several awards, including an ERS Administrator's Special Merit Award for outstanding research, an American Agricultural Economics Association's Quality of Research Discovery Award, and an ERS Excellence Award for Research. LeBlanc also received an ERS Administrator's Special Merit Award for outstanding EEO contributions.

LeBlanc has a B.S. in resource development from Michigan State U. and an M.S. and a Ph.D. in resource economics from Cornell U.

Reilly Is Appointed RTD Deputy Director

John Reilly has been appointed deputy director of the Resources and Technology Division, where his primary responsibility will be to coordinate

the divisionwide program of technology research. Reilly will continue to serve as acting leader of the Technology Research and Assessment Section in the Inputs, Technology, and Productivity Branch.

Reilly's research experience has covered a broad range of U.S. and international energy and natural resource issues in both government and private



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research organizations. He began his career in 1978 as an energy economist, first with the U.S. Dept. of Energy and then with the U.S. Dept. of Transportation. In 1980, he moved to the Institute for Energy Analysis of the Oak Ridge Associated Universities and, in 1985, to the Pacific Northwest Laboratory of the Battelle Memorial Institute. Since joining ERS in 1986, Reilly has conducted and managed research on new technologies and their impacts on agriculture; ethanol production and policy issues; and land values, including development of new data collection systems.

Reilly's research has been published widely in professional journals, USDA and other government reports, and books, including *Global Energy: Assessing the Future*.

Reilly has a B.S. in economics and political science from the U. of Wisconsin and an M.S. and a Ph.D. in economics from the U. of Pennsylvania.

Goodloe Is New Section Leader in ATAD

Carol Goodloe is the new leader, Pacific Rim Section, Developed Market Economies Branch, Agriculture and Trade Analysis Division.

Goodloe joined ERS in 1978. She has worked on numerous



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agricultural trade issues between the United States and Canada and was a technical adviser on

agriculture for the U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement of 1987.

Goodloe has worked on nutrition, food aid, financial conditions, and food policy in developing countries. During November 1982—March 1983, she worked on world food consumption and nutrition with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Rome, Italy.

Goodloe has a B.A. in history and German from Wesleyan College and an M.A. from the U. of Kentucky in international commerce. She has also studied at the U. of Heidelberg in the Federal Republic of Germany and the U. of Klug in Romania.

Goodloe has received three ERS Administrator's Special Merit Awards, an ERS Excellence Award for staff analysis, and a USDA Superior Service Award for providing economic analyses regarding agricultural trade issues for the U.S.-Canadian trade agreement.

Kuchler Becomes Section Leader in RTD

Frederick Kuchler has been appointed leader, Land Values Section, Land Branch, Resources and Technology Division.

Kuchler joined ERS in 1981, where his research involved



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cooperative efforts with a broad array of Federal and State scientists and economists to develop

economic impact estimates to guide USDA's response to

pesticide regulations proposed by the Environmental Protection Agency. In 1985, Kuchler became project leader for technology research in the Inputs, Technology, and Productivity Branch. There his research focused on economic assessments of new technologies and the impacts of regulations on research and development in the biotechnology industry. Kuchler has just completed a 4-month detail to USDA's Office of Agricultural Biotechnology, where he provided an economic perspective on regulatory alternatives and identified issues for which ERS analyses could make a contribution.

Kuchler's research has been widely published in USDA and outside sources and has earned him two ERS Administrator's Special Merit Awards for outstanding research.

Kuchler received an A.B. in economics from the U. of California (Davis) and an M.A. and a Ph.D. in economics from the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State U.

Osteen Is Appointed RTD Section Leader

Craig Osteen has been appointed leader, Pest Control and Regulation Section, Inputs, Technology, and Productivity Branch, Resources and Technology Division.

Osteen joined ERS in 1979 to conduct research on the



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feasibility of integrated pest management. Osteen's research later expanded to include the economic

implications of Environmental Protection Agency pesticide regulations, with a special focus on corn and soybean production. His work has also included extensive data development efforts through design and implementation of numerous pesticide use surveys.

Osteen's published work includes numerous USDA reports, joint USDA-State reports, and journal articles. He has received three ERS Administrator's Special Merit Awards.

Osteen has a B.S. from the U. of Michigan in resource planning and conservation and an M.S. and a Ph.D. in resource economics from Michigan State U.

Swanson Is New AREC Section Leader

Linda Swanson is the new leader, Population Studies Section, Human Resources Branch, Agriculture and Rural Economy Division.

Swanson joined ERS in 1980. Her work has focused on



Carolyn Riley

population change in nonmetro areas and on social indicators of well-being in nonmetro

counties. Her recent work includes examining the effects of family structure on the economic well-being of nonmetro children.

Swanson has a B.A. in psychology and sociology from Chatham College and an M.S. in sociology and a Ph.D. in sociology with a specialization in demography from the U. of Michigan. While at the U. of Michigan, she worked as a fellow at the Population Studies Center and as a teaching assistant on the Detroit Area Study.

Swanson has received an ERS Administrator's Special Merit Award for her contribution to the report *Rural Economic Development in the 1980's: Preparing for the Future*.

Highlights of Staff Activities

Agriculture and Rural Economy Division

Calvin Beale spoke at a conference on attracting retirees to Alabama, in Oxford, Ala. • **Kenneth Deavers**, **Thomas Hady**, and **Richard Long** were discussants and **Robert Hoppe** presented a paper, "Policies to Help the Persistent and Temporary Poor" at a Congressional Research Service symposium • **Deavers** and **Long** also presented a paper comparing U.S. and Western European perspectives on rural policy at a national public policy education conference in Cincinnati, Ohio • and **Deavers** discussed rural policies facing the 1990's at a National Planning Association symposium in Kansas City, Mo., and at a National Coastal Resources and Development Board of Governors meeting in Beauford, N.C. • and **Long** described current rural economic trends and conditions at a western regional research committee meeting on rural development strategy options, in Reno, Nev., and a Southern Legislative Conference meeting on new challenges for regional economic development, in Charleston, W. Va. • **David Harrington**, **James Johnson**, and **Michael Salassi** made presentations at a joint U.S.-Canada workshop on agricultural income and wealth • **James Miller** discussed ERS's research program at a USDA Extension Service meeting for community and rural development specialists • **Norman Reid** participated in a

ERS Alumni News

[We invite ERS alumni to write to us at the address on page 2 about what they or other alumni are doing, where they are living, etc.]

Former ERS economist **C.W. Crickman** now lives at 5805 Williamsburg Landing Dr., Williamsburg, Va. 23185 • ERS retiree **John Putman** died Nov. 9 in Lincoln, Nebr. • and ERS retiree **Royal Thompson** died Nov. 20 in Washington, D.C.

10-day study tour of rural development projects in the Federal Republic of Germany • **Reid** also discussed ERS findings for rural America at a Northeast rural development policy options workshop in Syracuse, N.Y. • and **Reid** discussed current conditions in rural America at a Council of State Policy and Planning Agencies meeting in Portland, Maine • **Sherman Robinson** (visiting scholar from the U. of California, Berkeley) presented a joint ERS-U. of Maryland seminar, "Modeling the Removal of Production Incentive Distortions in the U.S. Agricultural Sector," in College Park, Md. • **Robinson** also presented a seminar, "Agricultural Trade Liberalization: Effects on the U.S. Economy," at Harvard U. • **David Sears** discussed planning for rural America at a U. of Massachusetts seminar • and **Mervin Yetley** hosted a Chinese delegation from Southwest Agricultural U., Chung Cheng, China.

Agriculture and Trade Analysis Division

Harry Baumes participated in an agricultural forum on enterprise, policy, and marketing, sponsored by U.S. Representative Amory Houghton, in Alfred, N.Y. • **Baumes** also presented a paper, "U.S. Agricultural Policy: Setting, Process, Direction" at a rural credit seminar, in São Paulo, Brazil • **Richard Brown, John Link, Myles Mielke, and Ricardo Krajewski** briefed U.S. Wheat Associates directors on agricultural conditions in Latin America • at an African Studies Association meeting in Chicago, Ill., **Mary Burfisher** presented a paper, "Interregional Trade in West Africa," and **Carl Mabbs-Zeno** presented a paper, "African Interests at the GATT Negotiations" • **Edward Cook** and **Yuri Markish** were interviewed by the "Voice of America" on reforms in Soviet agriculture and prospects for a resolution of current food market

problems in the U.S.S.R. • **Cook** and **Kenneth Gray** discussed U.S.S.R. reform efforts with a *Time* magazine correspondent • **Gray** also participated in a conference on the U.S.S.R. and its international economic relations, in Warrenton, Va. • **Frederick Crook** assisted the agricultural counselor at the Shenyang Consulate in Shenyang, China • **Arthur Dommen** gave a seminar on low-resource agriculture in Africa at Cornell U. • **George Gardner, John Parker, and Patricia Scheid** spent two weeks at the Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture in Cairo • **Gene Mathia, Ray Nightingale, and Shahla Shapouri** participated in a U.S. Agency for International Development meeting to review current estimates of food aid in the 1990's and available economic models • **Nightingale** also discussed the world food situation at the U. of Wisconsin • **Vernon Roningen** presented a seminar on ERS SWOPSIM modeling efforts and trade liberalization research to Agriculture Canada researchers, in Ottawa • **Nancy Schwartz** presented a paper, "Manufactures Trade Strategies and Agricultural Trade Impacts" at an Applied Econometrics Association conference • **Francis Tuan** was interviewed by RFD Satellite TV on China's agricultural situation and trade prospects • **Kelley White** presented a paper, "Agricultural Policy in the United States: Implications of the Uruguay Round," at a seminar on problems and perspectives of agriculture in Piracicaba, in São Paulo, Brazil • and **Kathryn Zeimetz** participated in an international conference on U.S.S.R. participation in the GATT.

Commodity Economics Division

Lorna Aldrich represented ERS at an executive committee meeting of the Northeastern Agricultural and Resource

Economics Association, in Boston, Mass. • **Robert Bishop, Lee Christensen, Mark Weimar, and Lawrence Witucki** participated in a National Broiler Council meeting • **Bishop, Christensen, and Weimar** also discussed the U.S. broiler industry and international trade in broilers with representatives of a Mexican poultry company • **Christensen** participated in a World Poultry Congress, in Nagoya, Japan • **Robert Bohall and Mark Weimar** participated in a meeting of the American Meat Institute in Las Vegas, Nev. • **Boyd Buxton** discussed the outlook for fruits and vegetables at a Southern Regional Agricultural Outlook Conference in Atlanta, Ga. • **Donald Blayney, Richard Fallert, James Miller, and Paul Westcott** discussed a General Accounting Office study of the impacts of the Dairy Termination Program with General Accounting Office analysts • **Peter Buzzanell** pretested the sugarbeet questionnaire for the 1988 Farm Costs and Returns Survey in Idaho and Oregon • **Nathan Childs and Stephanie Mercier** presented a paper on the impacts of exchange rates on U.S. grain exports at a regional research committee meeting in Minneapolis, Minn. • **Childs** also presented a paper on U.S. rice distribution patterns at a Rice Council for Market Development meeting, in Houston, Tex. • **Annette Clauson** met with sugarbeet growers and mill staff in North Dakota and Minnesota to discuss and pretest sugarbeet and sugarcane questionnaires for the 1988 Farm Costs and Returns Survey • **Terry Crawford and Ronald Gustafson** participated in a Grazing Land Forum, in Harpers Ferry, W. Va. • **Richard Fallert** briefed leaders of the French dairy industry on ERS's study of bovine somatotropin • **Fallert and Carolyn Betts** reviewed the bovine somatotropin study with an Italian delegation of dairy scientists, veterinarians, and industry representatives •

[Continued on back page.]

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["Highlights," continued from page 7.]

Edward Glade participated in a USDA/Port of Houston workshop on trends in ocean shipping of agricultural commodities, in Houston, Tex. • **Joseph Glauber** gave a paper at an Applied Econometric Association conference on international commodity market modelling • **Verner Grise** met with tobacco officials from Zimbabwe • **Grise** also participated in a meeting of the Burley and Dark Leaf Exporter Association, in Asheville, N.C. • **Charles Handy** was named president of the Food Distribution Research Society, in Houston, Tex. • **Shannon Hamm** and **Amy Sparks** gave papers and **Glenn Zepp** was a discussant at a Rutgers U. workshop on markets for vegetables in the western hemisphere • **William Lin** gave a paper on the demand and prices for rice at an American Association of Cereal Chemists meeting, in San Diego, Calif. • **Lin**, **Janet Livezey**, **Keith Menzie**, and **James Schaub** briefed a Japanese economist on the U.S. production potential and yield trends for food and feed grains • **Rosanna Morrison** discussed a Procter and Gamble fat substitute at the company's headquarters in Cincinnati, Ohio • **Patrick O'Brien** participated in a Dupont Corporation planning session focused on the long-term

agricultural outlook, in Wilmington, Del. • **Neill Schaller** and **Kenneth Baum** (RTD) participated in an international conference on sustainable agriculture systems, in Columbus, Ohio • **Sara Schwartz** participated in a World Grain Congress in Buenos Aires, Argentina • **Schwartz** also discussed the wheat situation and outlook with an Australian team of analysts from the government and grain trading firms • **Ronald Trostle** gave a paper on estimating food aid needs at a National Research Council workshop • and **Larry Van Meir** reviewed the feed outlook at a symposium for poultry industry representatives at North Carolina State U., in Raleigh, N.C.

Resources and Technology Division

At a USDA conference on low input/sustainable agriculture (LISA), **Kenneth Baum**, **Stan Daberkow**, **Philip Szmedra**, and **Neill Schaller** (CED) discussed current and planned LISA research with representatives of land-grant universities • **Cheryl Christensen** and **Mary Knudson** discussed plant genetic engineering at a conference on transgenic plants, in Annapolis, Md. • **Peter DeBraal** was interviewed by USDA's TV show "Down to Earth" on the extent of

foreign ownership of U.S. agricultural land • **Ralph Heimlich** discussed research on the productivity of highly erodible land at a USDA Soil Conservation Service seminar • **John Reilly** represented ERS at a North Central regional research committee meeting on the economics of biotechnology • and **Marlow Vesterby** was interviewed by a *New York Times* reporter who is writing stories on both the urbanization of agricultural land and State and local efforts to preserve farmland.

Office of the Administrator

James Horsfield discussed ERS's data management program at an Agricultural Economics Reference Organization conference in College Station, Tex. • **Horsfield** and **Edward Reinsel** participated in an Association of Public Data Users meeting in Washington, D.C. • **John Lee** participated in an executive committee meeting of the Great Plains Agricultural Council in Denver, Colo. • **Lee** also discussed the future role of the Joint Council at a Joint Council on Food and Agricultural Sciences meeting • and **Lee** also presented a seminar, "Agricultural Research and International Trade," as part of the centennial celebration of the Georgia Agricultural Experiment Stations, in Experiment, Ga.